



The Greatness of God's Word

An Inductive Hebrew Grammar

Psalm 119:1-8 - ALEPH

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my colleague Dr. Jim Davison for his tremendous overall help in typing this book for me.

I also want to thank my former students and colleagues in ministry, Marty Daly for all of his technological expertise and help in the publication of my works, and Ruth Whitaker for her help in formatting and saving my works for publication.

I also would like to thank my parents for instilling in me a love of the Bible from childhood.

Finally, and foremost, I want to thank my wife Janet for her unfailing encouragement, her infinite patience and kindness, and for her constant love and sharing in all of life and ministry with me. She is truly אִשָּׁת־חַיִל.

- Gary Staats

Lesson 1: Psalm 119:11.1 Text

אֲשֶׁרִי תְּמִימֵי־דַרְךְ הַהִלְכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה:

1.2 Vocabulary

תְּמִימֵי	adjective	“blameless”
הִלַּךְ	verb	“to walk”
תּוֹרָה	noun	“instruction”

1.3 Grammar

Psalm 119 is a great psalm that deals with the importance of the scripture, the Torah, in a study of the Torah, that is, the instruction of the Lord, and how important it is to spend time meditating in it. This psalm is written using the Hebrew alphabet: we begin with *aleph* and we move all the way through to *taw*. There are eight verses with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, until we come to the end of this great psalm, exalting the scriptures, exalting the word of God with 176 verses.

The first part in the first eight verses, beginning with *aleph*, reads as follows:

אֲשֶׁרִי תְּמִימֵי־דַרְךְ

“Happy are those who are blameless in the way.” The word אֲשֶׁרִי is the plural, and it is a noun from אֶשֶׁר, and it means “happiness.” We are

looking at many happinesses. “...come to the person...” or “...relate to the person who is upright in the way,” they that are upright. תָּמִיִּם actually is an adjective meaning “blameless” or “upright”. תָּמִיִּם is a plural adjective in construct with דְּרָךְ, and דְּרָךְ is the word meaning “way”, a noun. “Those who are blameless or upright in the way are happy.”

It is interesting that in the New Testament believers are referred to as those who follow “the way”. In the book of Acts in particular, and “the way” of course is referring to Christ as the way to eternal life, as the way to the Father’s presence.

The text goes on: הַהֲלֹכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה. “Those who walk in the Torah of the Lord.” הַ is the definite article, and הֲלֹכִים is from the verb הָלַךְ, meaning “to walk”. Notice it has an O-class vowel, and the ים ending, showing that we are looking at a masculine plural form. This O-class vowel gives it away as a participle, hence it is a Qal active participle from the root הָלַךְ, to walk. “Those who walk in...” (בְּ is just your inseparable preposition “in”) with תוֹרַת יְהוָה. תוֹרַת יְהוָה are two nouns in construct. תוֹרַת means “instruction”, and notice תוֹרַת becomes תוֹרַת with a final *taw*, and הַ changes to תַּ in the construct here of תוֹרַת. “Those who walk in the instruction of the Lord.” יְהוָה is the noun that takes the construct – noun absolute.

1.4 Translation

“Happy are those who are blameless in the way, those who walk in the instruction of the Lord.”

1.5 **Application/Interpretation**

One of the most important things that we can do is to conduct our lives according to the instruction of the Lord. Over and over again in scripture we have that emphasis. Jesus, after giving the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter seven, encourages those to live and do what He has taught. We also have in Galatians chapter five the exhortation to walk according to the Spirit. Those who walk in the instruction of the Lord and follow His will are those who are happy.

The Psalmist continues with the second *aleph* in verse two:

Lesson 2: Psalm 119:22.1 Text

אַשְׁרֵי נֹצְרֵי עֵדוּתָיו בְּכָל־לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ:

2.2 Vocabulary

נֹצַר	verb	“to keep”
עֵדוּת	noun	“testimony”
דָּרַשׁ	verb	“to seek”

2.3 Grammar

אַשְׁרֵי נֹצְרֵי עֵדוּתָיו

“Happy are they who keep his testimonies.” Again we have אַשְׁרֵי, meaning “happy,” as we saw in verse one. The noun is in a masculine plural construct form. Notice נֹצְרֵי is from נֹצַר, meaning “to keep.” We have an O-class vowel and we have a *sere-yod*, looking at a Qal active participle again, in the construct state in the plural, with עֵדוּתָיו. “Happy are they who keep...” עֵדוּתָיו is from עֵדוּת, a noun meaning “testimony”. Notice in the plural we have עֵדוּת with a *holem* before the ת, indicating a feminine plural form, followed by יוּ, and notice the יוּ is added to plural forms, and the ׀ is indicative of a third masculine singular pronominal suffix. “Happy are they who keep” [not only who study them but who keep] “his testimonies.” They are willing to conduct their lives by them.

Testimony looks at the rules of conduct, and those who keep God’s rules of conduct are those who are happy. Then there are those who seek him with all of their heart.

בְּכָל-לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ:

“*They that seek him with the whole heart...*” Notice בְּ again is your inseparable preposition, meaning “with”. Notice כָּל means “all” or the “entirety of” the heart, hence the whole heart. לֵב is just a singular noun meaning “heart,” or we could understand this to be one’s total mental and spiritual being. יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ is from דָּרַשׁ, “to seek,” and notice it is the Qal imperfect third masculine plural, with the וּ giving it away as the third masculine plural form, from the root דָּרַשׁ. The י prefix is indicative of the imperfect, and the הוּ is the pronominal suffix, third masculine singular.

2.4 Translation

“*Happy are they who keep his testimonies, they that seek him with the whole heart.*”

2.5 Application/Interpretation

Happy are those who not only keep his precepts or his testimonies, but with all their heart they seek Him. How essential it is to seek the Lord with our whole being, with our whole heart. Here we are talking about a relationship with the Lord, not simply a mental, intellectual understanding, but a relationship in which one’s total mind and being wants to seek the Lord’s plan and His will, and specifically in this context His precepts or His testimonies, which become the rules of conduct, which will demonstrate one’s willingness to follow the will of the Lord.

Then he continues in verse three with the third *aleph*:

Lesson 3: Psalm 119:33.1 Text

אַף לֹא־פָעַלּוּ עֲוֹלָה בְּדַרְכֵי הַלְכוּ:

3.2 Vocabulary

אַף	conjunction	“indeed”
לֹא	negative particle	“not”
פָעַל	verb	“to do”
עֲוֹלָה	noun	“unrighteousness”

3.3 Grammar

אַף לֹא־פָעַלּוּ עֲוֹלָה

Notice “yeah” or “indeed.” This is a conjunction; it is showing something even more: “*even more*” or “*yeah, they do not do unrighteousness.*” Notice **לֹא** is your negative particle meaning “never” do they practice unrighteousness. **פָעַלּוּ** is from the verb **פָעַל** meaning “to do.” It is a third common plural form with the ׀, Qal perfect third common plural. “*Indeed, they do not do*” **עֲוֹלָה** “*unrighteousness.*” It is a noun, the object of what they do not do. They seek to be righteous rather than unrighteous in relationship to the Lord.

בְּדַרְכָּיו הֵלְכוּ:

“*They walk in His ways.*” Notice again the בְּ is the inseparable preposition, דַּרְךְ is the plural noun that means “ways” in construct, and notice the ending, we are looking at a plural pronominal suffix added to the noun “ways” in construct plural. We would translate it “*in his ways*” they walk. הֵלְכוּ is just your Qal perfect third common plural from הֵלֵךְ.

3.4 Translation

“*Indeed, they do not do unrighteousness, they walk in his ways.*”

3.5 Application/Interpretation

They who not only seek Him with all of their heart are happy, but they do not do what is unrighteousness, what the Lord would not want one to do, and they walk in all of His ways, in the direction that He wants them to walk, which would be the ways of doing what is right in His eyes. One seeks to do one’s life by doing what the Lord approves of and what would be right in his eyes.

He continues with the next *aleph* in verse four:

Lesson 4: Psalm 1194.1 Text

אַתָּה צִוִּיתָהּ פְּקֻדֹתַי לְשֹׁמֵר מְאֹד:

4.2 Vocabulary

צִוָּה	verb	“to ordain”
פְּקֻדָּה	noun	“precept”
שָׁמַר	verb	“to keep”
מְאֹד	adverb	“exceedingly”

4.3 Grammar

אַתָּה צִוִּיתָהּ פְּקֻדֹתַי

“*You have ordained your precepts...*” Notice the **אַתָּה** is just your 2nd masculine personal pronoun “you.” **צִוִּיתָהּ** is your Piel perfect second masculine singular from **צִוָּה**, “to ordain” or “to command”. Notice the **תָּה** ending is indicative of a second masculine singular suffix, which shows that we are looking at the second person. At times when you have the pronominal suffix added to the verb, you will also have a final **ה** (not always, but sometimes we find that). “*You (literally) have ordained...*” **פְּקֻדֹתַי** “...your precepts.” **פְּקֻדָּה** is from the noun **פְּקֻדָּה**, which means “precept”. Notice these are rules that God has given, particular rules for a man to follow. “*You have ordained your precepts.*” The noun is a

plural noun in construct with ךְ, the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular. “*You have ordained your precepts...*”

לְשׁוֹר מְאֹד: “...*to keep exceedingly*” or that we would “*diligently keep them.*” Notice לְשׁוֹר is your Qal infinitive construct, followed by the adverb מְאֹד. “...*to keep with diligence*” or “*to keep exceedingly.*” “*You have ordained your precepts, that we should observe them with diligence and keep them.*”

4.4 Translation

“*You have ordained your precepts, to diligently keep them.*”

4.5 Application/Interpretation

The Lord’s precepts are to be kept diligently. May this be ever our goal.

He then continues with the fifth *aleph* in verse five:

Lesson 5: Psalm 119:55.1 Text

אַחֲלֵי יִכְנֹוּ דְרָכַי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֵּיהֶּ:

5.2 Vocabulary

אַחֲלֵי	interjection	“O that!”
כִּוֵּן	verb	“to establish”
חֻק	noun	“statute”

5.3 Grammar

אַחֲלֵי יִכְנֹוּ דְרָכַי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֵּיהֶּ:

Notice אַחֲלֵי means “O that!” It basically is wishing; it is a particle of wishing. “*O that my ways were directed...*” לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֵּיהֶּ “*...to keep your statutes.*” Notice יִכְנֹוּ is from the root כִּוֵּן, “to establish”. We are looking at a Niphal imperfect, third common plural, from כִּוֵּן. “O that my ways were established...” Notice דְרָכַי is from the root דָּרַךְ again, the noun, and it is in a plural construct form with יִ, which is your pronominal suffix, first person singular, that is attached to a plural noun. לְשֹׁמֵר again is just your Qal infinitive construct, and חֻקֵּיהֶּ is from the noun חֻק, which means “statute”. This is something that is engraved, like in a stone. Notice

again it is from קָן , and in the plural construct here it changes from an O-class vowel to a *qibbus*, especially in a closed unaccented syllable here, with the ק , which is doubled, “your statutes.” Notice the plural noun in construct appears with the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular in the קָנֶיךָ .

5.4 Translation

“O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes.”

5.5 Application/Interpretation

“O that my ways...” Here is a particle of wishing. “O that this could be, that my ways were established to keep your statutes, your permanently engraved statutes, like that which has been engraved on stone. It is my desire that all of my ways would be directed to keep those statutes and obey them, says the Psalmist. This should be every believer’s desire.

The sixth *aleph* then begins in verse six:

Lesson 6: Psalm 119:66.1 Text

אֶז לֹא־אֲבוֹשׁ בְּהִבִּיטִי אֶל־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

6.2 Vocabulary

אֶז	adverb	“then”
בוֹשׁ	verb	“to be ashamed”
נִבֵּט	verb	“to have regard”
מִצְוָה	noun	“commandment”

6.3 Grammar

אֶז לֹא־אֲבוֹשׁ

Notice then, here we have an adverb in the אֶז. לֹא is the negative particle meaning “not”. “*Then I would not be ashamed.*” אֲבוֹשׁ is from the root בוֹשׁ. It is a Qal imperfect, first person singular, from בוֹשׁ.

בְּהִבִּיטִי

“...when I have regard...” or “...when I look unto all of your commandments.” Notice the בְּ is your inseparable preposition used in a temporal sense and the root here in נִבֵּט. It is a *pe nun* verb, and notice it is

actually a Hiphil infinitive construct with a first person pronominal suffix. It would be **יְהַנֵּב יָטִי**, and that **נ** of the verb coalesces or assimilates into the **ב**, and in this *pe nun* verb that is why we have the doubling, the *daghesh forte* in the **ב**. So **יְהַנֵּב יָטִי** becomes **יְהַבֵּב יָטִי**. Notice the **ה** gives it away as a Hiphil, and the A-I pattern, the *pathah* followed by the *hireq-yod*, indicates a Hiphil infinitive construct, standing in construct with the first person pronominal suffix **י**.

אֶל-כָּל-מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

“...when I have regard unto...” **אֶל** is just your preposition “unto”. “...unto all of your commandments.” This is God’s laws or God’s will in our life, and how we are to live it out in obedience to him. “...when I have regard unto all of your commandments.” Notice **כָּל** is a noun meaning “all” or the “totality”, and **מִצְוֹתֶיךָ** is from the noun **מִצְוָה**, and **ת** is your indicator of the feminine plural noun, and notice on that we have that plural noun in construct with **ךָ**, preceded by a *yod* and a *seghol*. The **ךָ** is the second personal masculine singular pronominal suffix.

6.4 Translation

“Then I would not be ashamed when I have regard unto all of your commandments.”

6.5 Application/Interpretation

When I have regard unto all of your commandments that will help regulate my life in obedience to you, I will not be ashamed. How important it is as we live life to make it our desire to have a total regard unto all of the Lord’s commandments. When we do, He says we will not be ashamed. It is interesting when we stand before the Lord, we know that as we live out his

commandments, we need not have fear in the judgment that will come someday, in the final judgment. First John 4 talks about that. We can live before the Lord without shame when we have regard unto all of His commandments.

The seventh *aleph* begins in verse seven:

Lesson 7: Psalm 119:77.1 Text

אוֹדֶה בְּיֶשֶׁר לִבִּי בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדָקָה:

7.2 Vocabulary

יָדָה	verb	“to praise”
יֶשֶׁר	noun	“uprightness”
לִבִּי	noun	“heart”
לִמַּד	verb	“to learn”
מִשְׁפָּט	noun	“judgment”
צְדָקָה	noun	“righteousness”

7.3 Grammar

אוֹדֶה בְּיֶשֶׁר לִבִּי

“I will praise you with uprightness of heart.” Notice אוֹדֶה is from the root יָדָה, “to praise”. What we have here is a Hiphil imperfect first person singular from the root יָדָה. Notice the final ה has elided, and what follows the ך then is ם, the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular. Notice the O-class vowel is here because historically the root would have

been **וְיָדָהּ**. It would have been a *pe waw* verb, and then when the *aleph* was added, we had a **אָ** (*aw*), changing to an **אוּ** (*o*), so **אָ** became **וְיָדָהּ**, with the final **וּ** dropping out, followed again by the pronominal suffix second masculine singular. So this is just your Hiphil imperfect first person singular, the **אָ** giving it away as a first person, from the root **וְיָדָהּ**. “*I will cause to give thanks to you with...*” Notice we have **בְּ** here showing an instrumentality use whereby thanks is given, “*...with the uprightness of heart.*” **יֵשֶׁר** is a noun meaning “uprightness”, and it is in construct with **לֵבָב**, meaning “heart”. “*I will cause to give thanks to You with the uprightness of heart...*”

בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדָקָה:

“*...when I learn the commandments of your righteousness...*” or “*...your righteous commandments...*” Notice **בְּ** is that inseparable preposition used in a temporal sense here. **לִמַּד** is the verb “to learn”. Notice we have a *shewa* followed by an O-class vowel, indicating a Qal infinitive construct from **לִמַּד**. “*...in my learning...*” **מִשְׁפָּטֶי** is from the noun **מִשְׁפָּט**. This word means “judgment,” and it looks at our relationship with our neighbor, and how we treat one another. The Psalmist is saying, “When I learn the judgments of your righteousness, of what is right in Your eyes, I will give thanks unto You with the uprightness of heart when I am allowed to learn that and practice that.” Notice again **מִשְׁפָּטֶי** is in the masculine plural with the *seré-yod* in construct with **צְדָקָה**, meaning “righteousness”, that becomes **צְדָקָה**, a noun in construct with **ךָ**, the pronominal suffix second masculine singular.

7.4 **Translation**

“I will cause to give thanks to you with the uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgments.”

7.5 **Application/Interpretation**

“When I learn the judgments of Your righteousness, then I will be able to give thanks unto You with an upright heart, for I am obeying that relationship that You want me to have with others.” May we aspire to do the same.

Finally, the final *aleph* is in verse eight, completing the eight uses of *aleph* in the acrostic here, using the Hebrew alphabet to begin a particular verse.

Lesson 8: Psalm 119:88.1 Text

אֶת־חֻקֶיךָ אֲשַׁמֵּר אֶל־תַּעֲזֹבְנִי עַד־מְאֹד:

8.2 Vocabulary

עֲזַב verb “to abandon”

מְאֹד adverb “utterly”

8.3 Grammar

אֶת־חֻקֶיךָ אֲשַׁמֵּר

Notice אֶת is the sign of the direct object. חֻקֶיךָ is from חֻק again, which means that which is an engraved statute, and notice it is now going into the plural construct, and it changes from that O-vowel to the *qibbus*, with the doubling of the ק in the plural form here, חֻקֶיךָ. The ךְ is your pronominal suffix, second masculine singular. “I will observe your statutes.” אֲשַׁמֵּר, is just your Qal imperfect first person singular from שָׁמַר.

אֶל־תַּעֲזֹבְנִי עַד־מְאֹד:

“Oh, do not forsake me utterly.” It reads, I will observe your statutes; do not abandon me עַד־מְאֹד, which literally means “unto that which is an increase,” or “utterly”. That would be a good way to render it. “Do not forsake me utterly.” He does not want to sin and be abandoned by

disobeying the Lord's statutes from the Lord's very presence and good will in his life. אַל is the negative particle meaning "not". Do not abandon me: תַּעֲזֹבְנִי. The root is עֲזַב, and it is just your Qal imperfect second masculine singular from עֲזַב, with your pronominal suffix, first person singular in the ךְּ, and notice the ךְּ here is like a hinge, to get to the final first person singular pronominal suffix. *"Do not abandon me utterly."*

8.4 Translation

"I will observe your statutes; do not abandon me utterly."

8.5 Application/Interpretation

He wants the Lord to always be taking care of him. I am reminded in the New Testament, that we are told in Jesus Christ that nothing can ever sever us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ. Our goal in life should be to fulfil His will in all of these areas: to walk in His instruction, to keep His testimonies, to seek Him with all of our heart, to do what is righteous rather than what is unrighteous and walk in His righteous ways, to observe diligently all of His particular precepts for us, and to keep those engraved commandments, those permanent commandments, to continue to keep them with every part of our being. Then we can know that we will not need to be ashamed, for we have regard, we are constantly looking to fulfil His commandments. Then we can give thanks to the Lord with an upright heart, when we learn His righteous commandments and how we are to deal with others according to His will and do it. He is determined, and that should be our determination, that we will observe His permanent statutes forever. We can be assured that He will never abandon us when we love as Christians, seen in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus with all of our heart and soul and mind, and to serve Him and faithfully do what He has asked us.